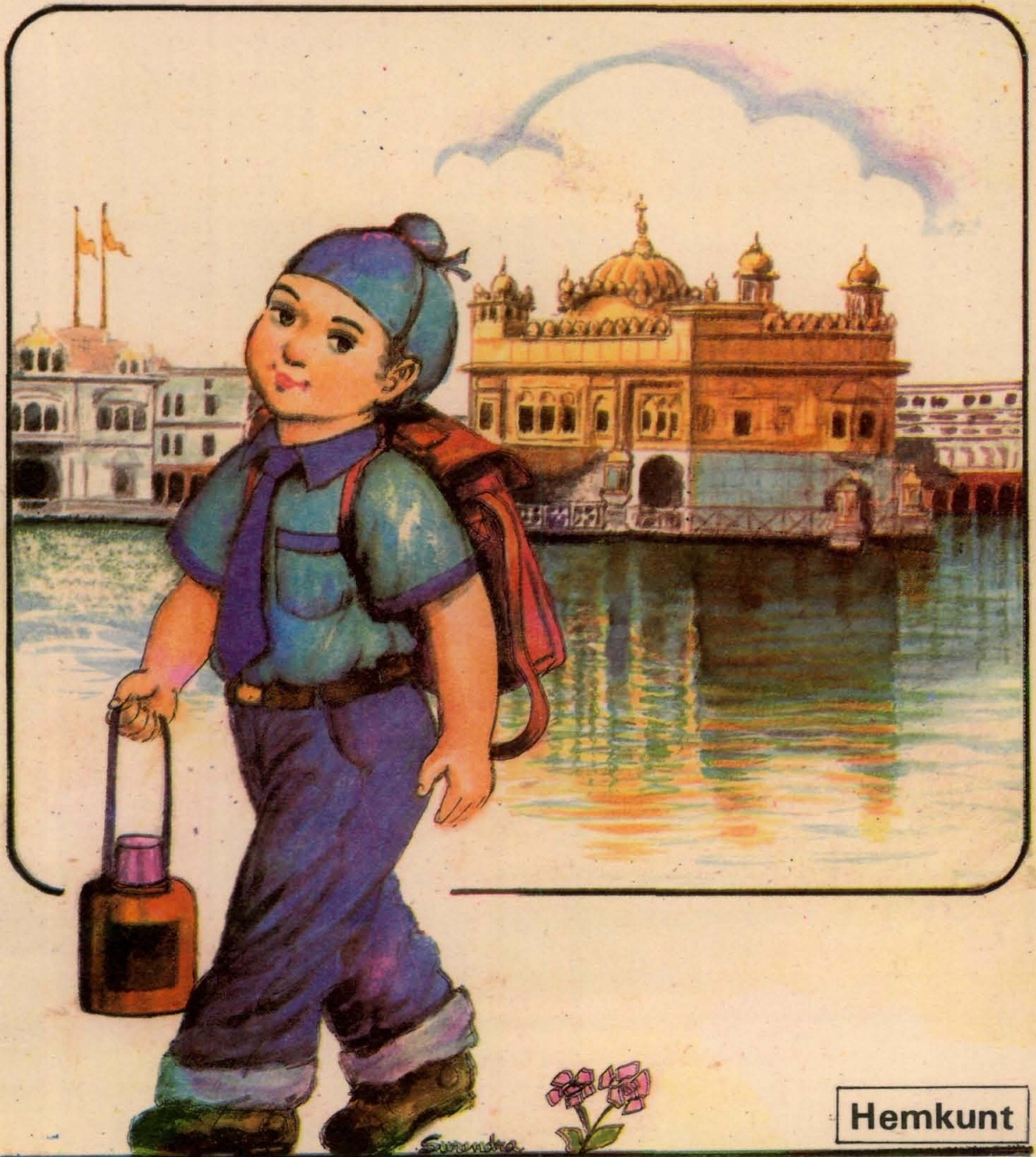


SIKH STUDIES



Hemkunt

SIKH STUDIES

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FURTHER BOOKS

Stories

Sikh History

Book I (Guru Nanak Dev)

Book II (Guru Angad to Guru Arjun Dev)

Book III (Guru Hargobind to Guru Teg Bahadur)

Book IV (Guru Gobind Singh)

Book V (Sikh Martyrs)

Book VI (Banda Singh Bahadur)

Book VII (Maharaja Ranjit Singh
and thereafter till 1989)

Preface

Understanding different religions and the basic element underlying them, lays the foundation for a good human being. Such understanding must be imparted at an early age.

This Primer is aimed at introducing children, in the first year of their schooling, to the fundamentals of Sikhism. It has been broadly divided into four parts: the Gurus, famous Sikh institutions, important symbols and significant principles and values of Sikhism.

Though the language strives to be simple and comprehensive, students of nursery may require help and guidance. Hints for Parents and Teachers have been provided to this end. This **Primer** thus provides the basic guidelines and a launching pad for parents and teachers to initiate children into Sikh studies.

This book does not claim to explain or elaborate upon the philosophy of Sikhism. It merely familiarizes the students with a few important personages, places, terms and concepts connected with it. In the process students are expected to get a glimpse into the ideas of equality, secularism, sharing, sacrifice etc.

Any suggestion regarding enteries, style or pattern of presentation are most welcome.

H.S. Singha
Rupinder Kaur

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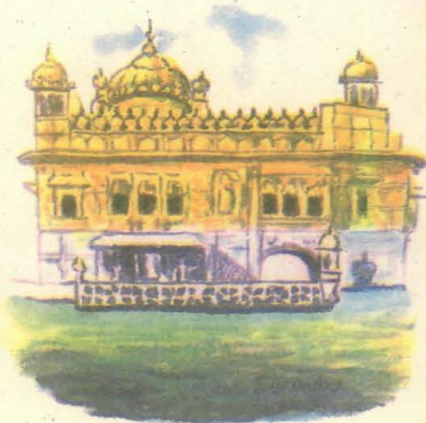
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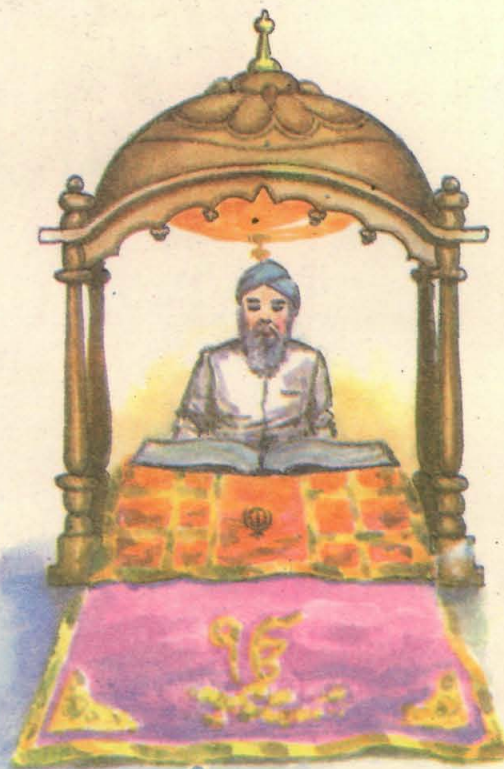
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PART I— THE GURUS

1. Guru Nanak Dev



Guru Nanak is the first Guru of the Sikhs. He founded Sikhism. He said that there are no Hindus or Muslims. All are the children of one God. He did away with rituals and idol worship.

Hints for Parents and Teachers:

Explain Guru Nanak's attitude towards secularism, rites and rituals etc., highlighting the emphasis he laid on truthful living, meditation combined with worldly hardwork ("*Nām Japana te kirat karana*"), oneness of God and brotherhood of man. These concepts can be illustrated by relating stories from his life.

2. Guru Angad



Guru Angad is the second Guru of the Sikhs. He was a disciple of Guru Nanak. He spread Guru Nanak's teachings. He also introduced Gurmukhi script and encouraged people to learn Punjabi.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

The spirit of devotion and dedication which made Guru Angad dear to Guru Nanak may be stressed.

3. Guru Amardas



Guru Amardas is the third Guru of the Sikhs. He was a disciple of the second Guru. He spread Sikhism far and wide by making disciples incharge of different regions. He asked the Sikhs to get together thrice a year—on the occasion of Baisakhi, Diwali and Maghi. He carried on the tradition of *Langar*.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

This is the stage to talk about festivals and their significance. It is worthwhile to give some information about Goindwal and the story of Akbar who took *langar* with the Guru.

4. Guru Ramdas



Guru Ramdas is the fourth Guru. He was the son-in-law of Guru Amardas. He founded the city of Amritsar. He spread Sikhism in north India.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

It would be interesting to tell the children the story of Amritsar coming up over the years around 'Amrit Srovar' and thus how it got its name.

5. Guru Arjun Dev



Guru Arjun Dev is the fifth Guru of the Sikhs. He was the youngest son of Guru Ramdas. He got the foundation stone of the Golden Temple laid. Guru Granth Sahib was compiled by him. He started the practice of *Daswandh*. He was arrested and tortured to death.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

Students may be told that to this day, Guru Arjun's martyrdom is remembered and *lassi* and other cold drinks are served from roadside camps. The concept of *Daswandh* may also be briefly introduced.

6. Guru Hargobind



Guru Hargobind, the only son of Guru Arjun Dev, became the sixth Guru. The Moghul kings were forcing people to become Muslims. The Guru fought against this. He laid down the foundation stone of the Akal Takht at Amritsar.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

The story of the Guru carrying two swords may be told to introduce the concept of *Meeri* and *Peeri*- temporal power and spiritual strength.

7. Guru Har Rai



Guru Har Rai is the seventh Guru. He was the grandson of Guru Hargobind. Like Guru Hargobind, he made Sikhism strong and popular.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

This story of the Guru being called to Delhi by Aurangzeb may be told. It may be emphasized how the Guru sent his elder son Ram Rai to the court but the latter's behaviour displeased the Guru.

8. Guru Harkrishan



Guru Harkrishan is the eighth Guru. He became Guru at the age of five. He was the youngest son of Guru Har Rai. He died of cholera at the age of eight. Gurdwara Bangla Sahib has been built at the place where the Guru stayed when he came to Delhi. He is also called the 'Bal Guru'.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

What may be highlighted here is that spirituality is independent of age. Children should seek inspiration from the 'Bal Guru' in imbibing values of self sacrifice, truthfulness and care for others. It is said that just by looking at him all pain vanishes. (*Jis dithe sab dukh jaye*)

The story of how Guru Harkrishan provided continuity in the line of succession for Gurus may also be told.

9. Guru Tegh Bahadur



Guru Tegh Bahadur was the youngest son of Guru Hargobind and a grand-uncle of Guru Harkrishan. He became the ninth Guru after the death of Guru Harkrishan.

The king cut his head off because the Guru would not become a Muslim. Gurdwara Sis Ganj was built where the Guru was killed.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

The story of Kashmiri Pandits' complaint of being converted to Islam may be told. It may be emphasized that the Guru sacrificed his life to protect Hindu religion.

10. Guru Gobind Singh

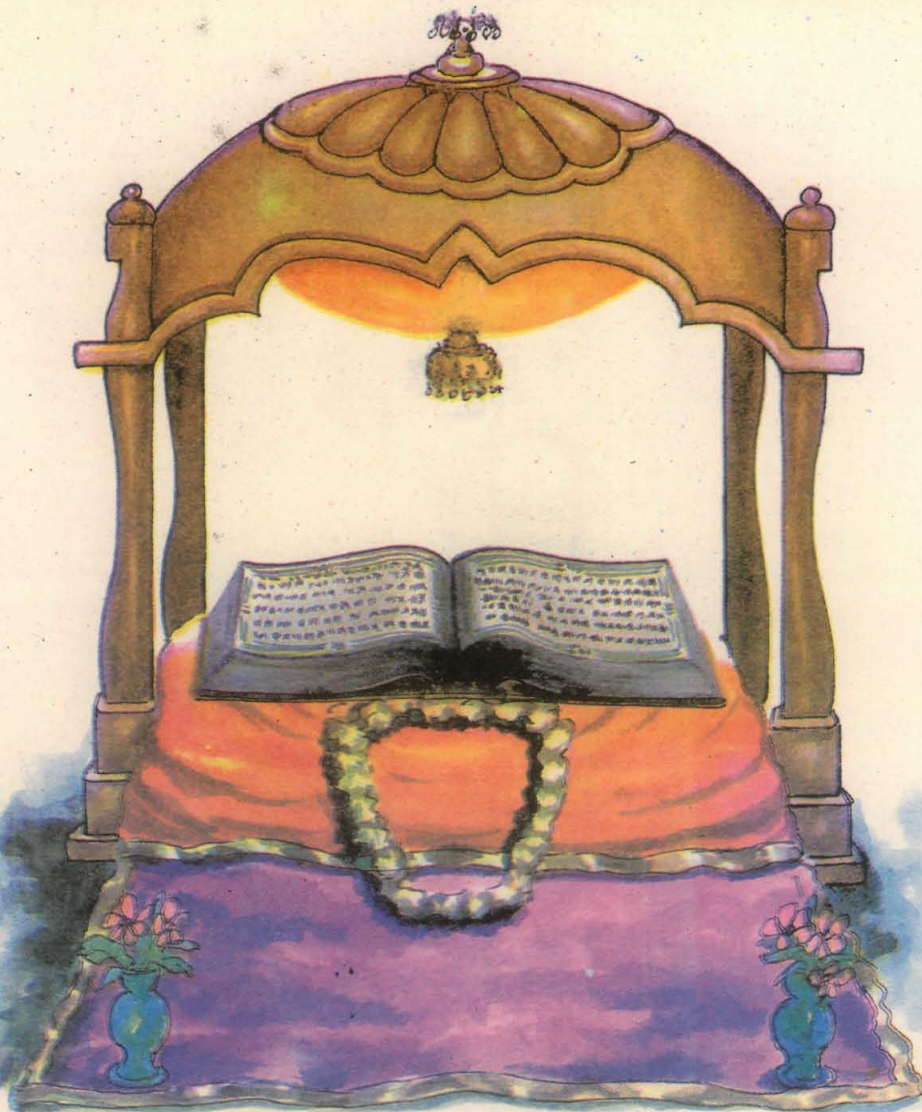


Guru Gobind Singh was the only son of Guru Tegh Bahadur. He was made the Guru at the age of nine after his father was killed. He said that the Guru Granth Sahib will be the Guru after him. He set up the Khalsa order. The five Ks were started by him.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

The sacrifices made by Guru Gobind Singh, particularly the sacrifice of his four sons, will be of interest to the children. The story of the founding of the Khalsa order in 1699 may be highlighted.

11. Guru Granth Sahib



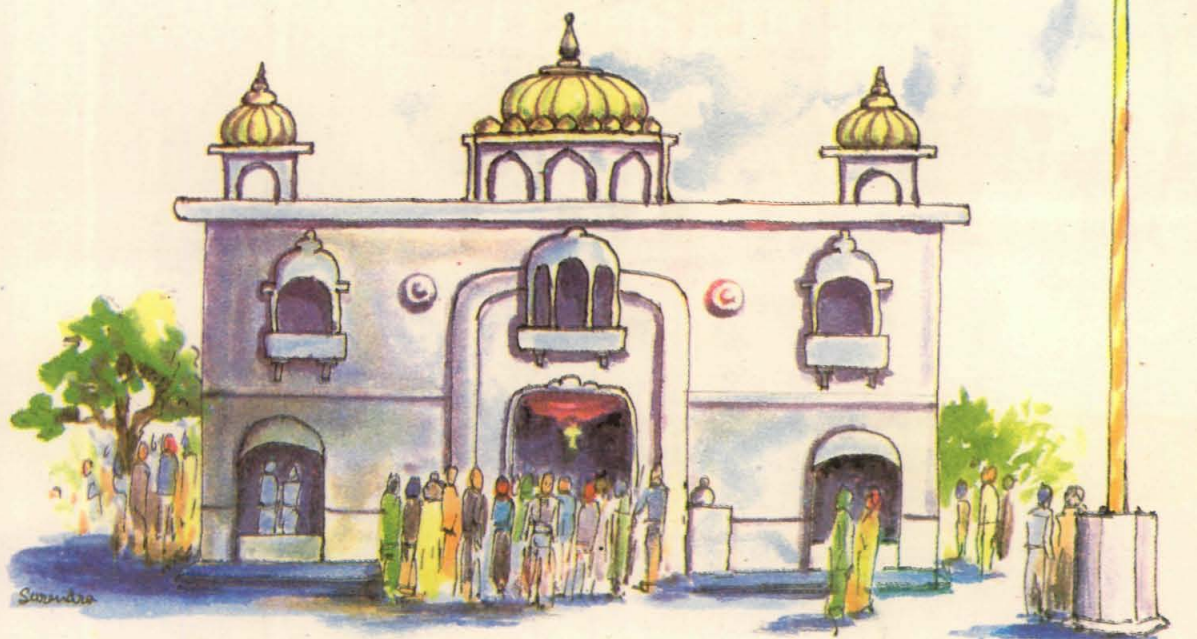
Guru Granth Sahib is the holy book of the Sikhs. It has writings of the Sikh Gurus, Muslim Fakirs, and Hindu Saints. Guru Gobind Singh said that this holy book will be the Guru after him. It is kept in all Gurdwaras.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

The secular approach of Sikhism may be highlighted by pointing to the varied authorship of the writings in the sacred text. How the adoration and veneration of Guru Granth Sahib is an article of faith with the Sikhs may be pointed out.

PART II—FAMOUS SIKH INSTITUTIONS

12. Gurdwara

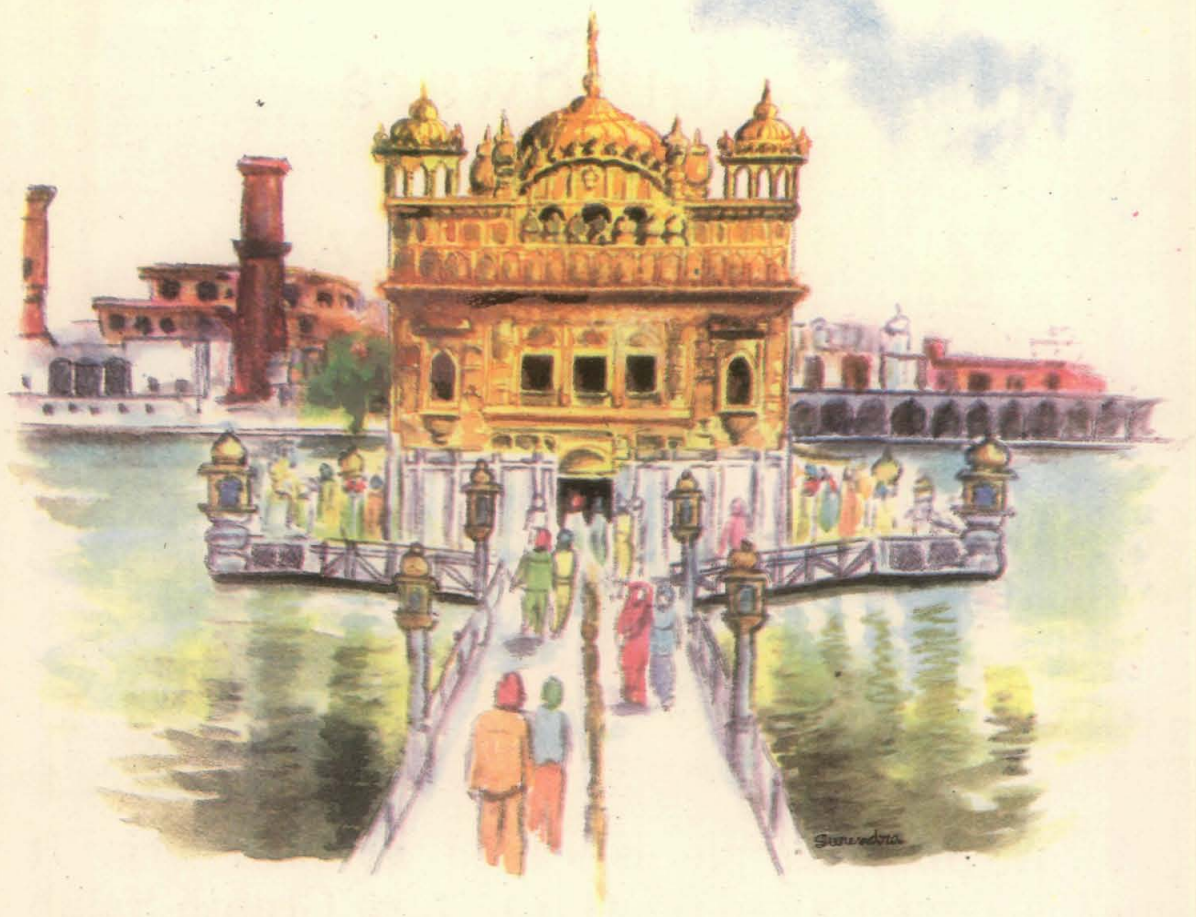


A Sikh temple is called a Gurdwara. It means a gateway to the Guru. Guru Granth Sahib is kept here. It is a place of worship but not of idol worship. Public Gurdwara can be known from a distance by the tall *Nishan Sahib*. *Langar* is served in most gurdwaras.. They are open to all. Some devout Sikhs have private gurdwaras in their homes.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

Children have to be told about the significance of a gurdwara as a place not only for religious functions but also for social functions. Concepts of *charhawa*, *prasad*, voluntary service of cleaning the premises, keeping shoes, and community kitchen may be brought out. The idea of humility and equality behind these concepts should be stressed.

13. The Golden Temple

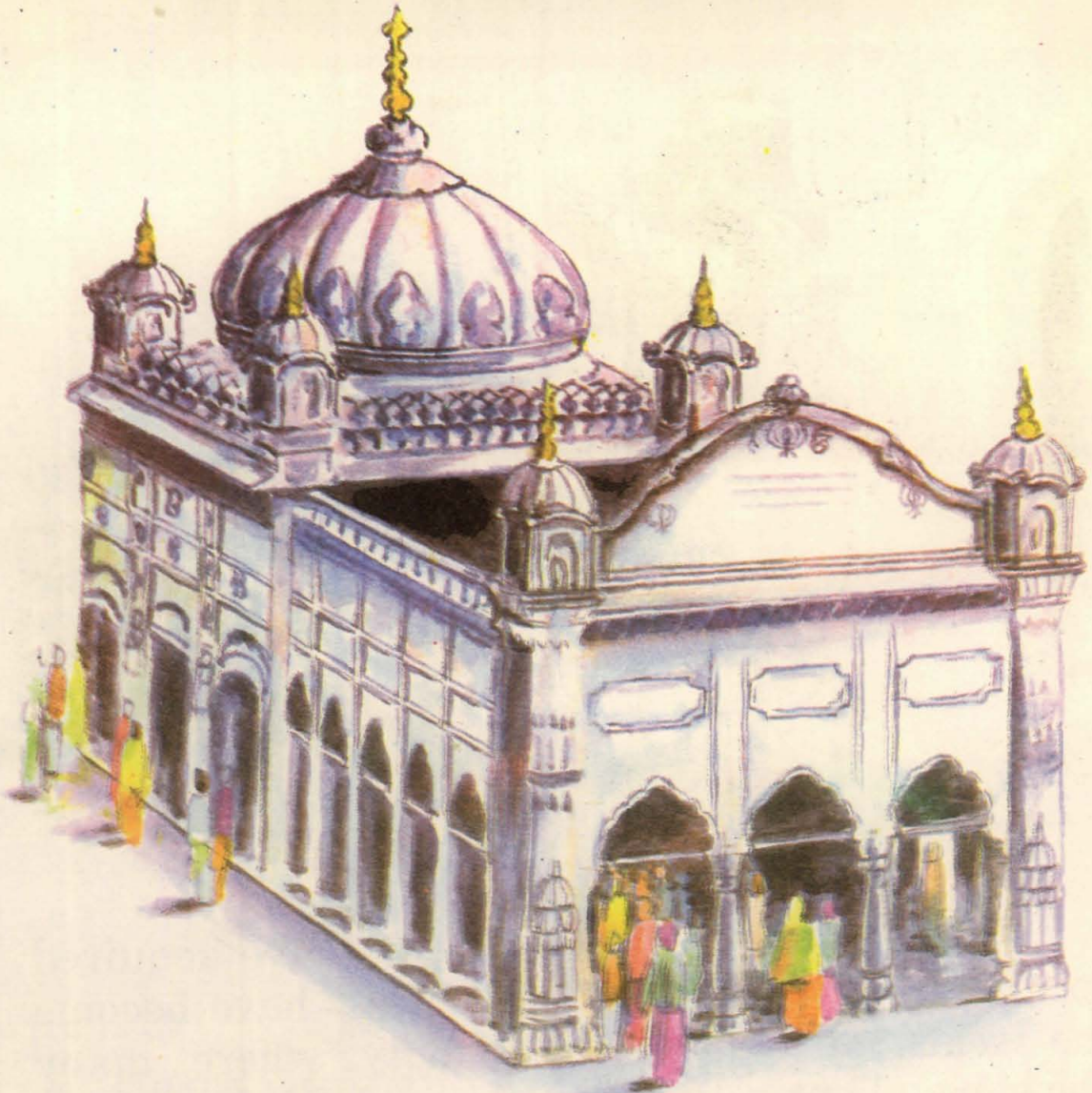


The Golden Temple is the Chief Shrine for the Sikhs. It is situated in Amritsar. Because of the gold plating done on it, it is called the Golden Temple. It is also called Harmander Sahib or Darbar Sahib.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

Give a brief history of the Golden Temple. Mention the main features of its architecture and structure. Also mention that the foundation stone was laid by a Muslim saint. Many Hindus visit it. It has four doors—one in each direction indicating that it is open to all. Also explain how it is complementary to Akal Takhat.

14. Nankana Sahib



Nankana Sahib is the birth place of Guru Nanak. It is in Pakistan. It was earlier known as Talwandi. There are many gurdwaras at Nankana Sahib. The most important gurdwara is Janam Asthan where Guru Nanak was born.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

Children may here be introduced to various historical gurdwaras outside India.

15. Takhats



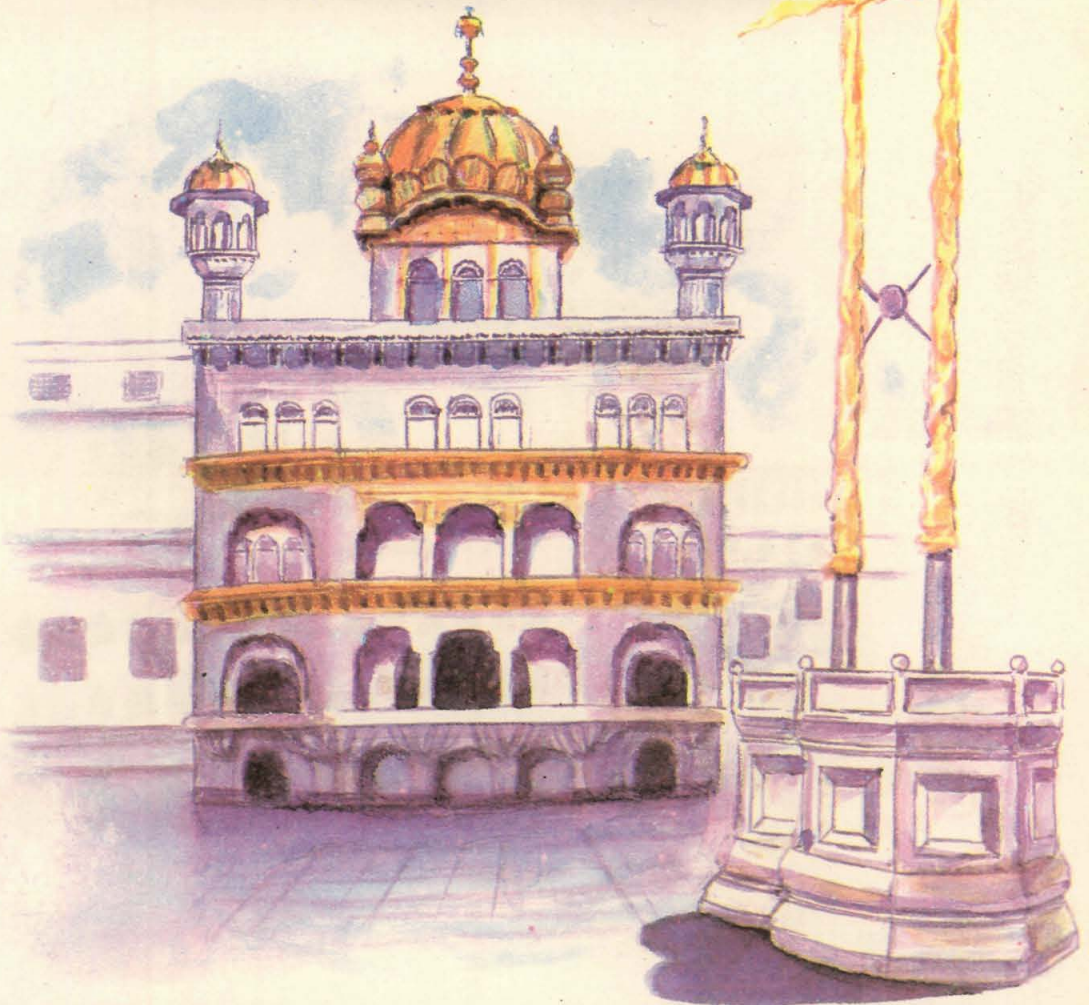
Among the gurdwaras, some have acquired special significance for Sikhs. They have become the seats of religious authority where many decisions about religious and social life have been taken. They are called Takhats which mean thrones and therefore symbolize authority.

They are five such Takhats. They are described on the following pages.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

It will be a good idea to give illustrations of some important decisions taken. Concept of *Hukamnama* may also be introduced.

16. Akal Takhat



Akal Takhat is the oldest of the five Takhats. It is situated in the Golden Temple Complex in Amritsar. While the Golden Temple is the Chief Holy Shrine, Akal Takaht is the highest seat of justice and worldly activity. It was founded by Guru Hargobind.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

This is the stage to reiterate the concept of *Meeri* and *Peeri*. Concritize it by a story from the life of Guru Hargobind.

17. Gurdwara Keshgarh Sahib

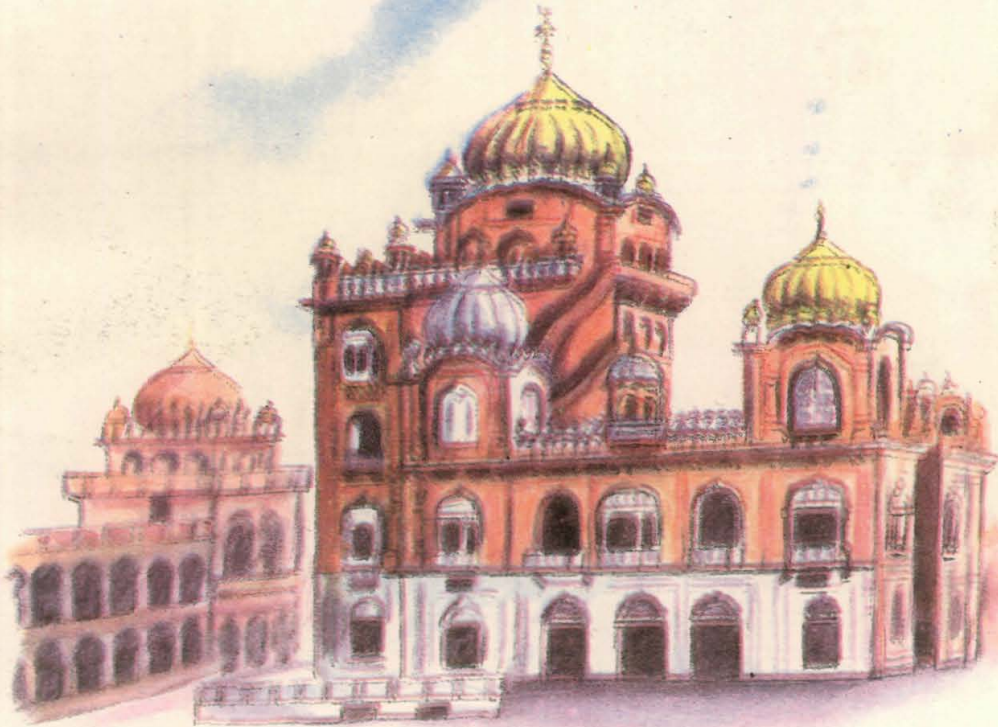


Keshgarh Sahib is the most important Gurdwara at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab. It is one of the Five Takhats. This is the place where Guru Gobind Singh set up the Khalsa order.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

Children should be told the story of the creation of the Khalsa brotherhood by Guru Gobind Singh on the Baisakhi of 1699 AD, mentioning the *Panj Piaras* and five Ks.

18. Harmander Sahib

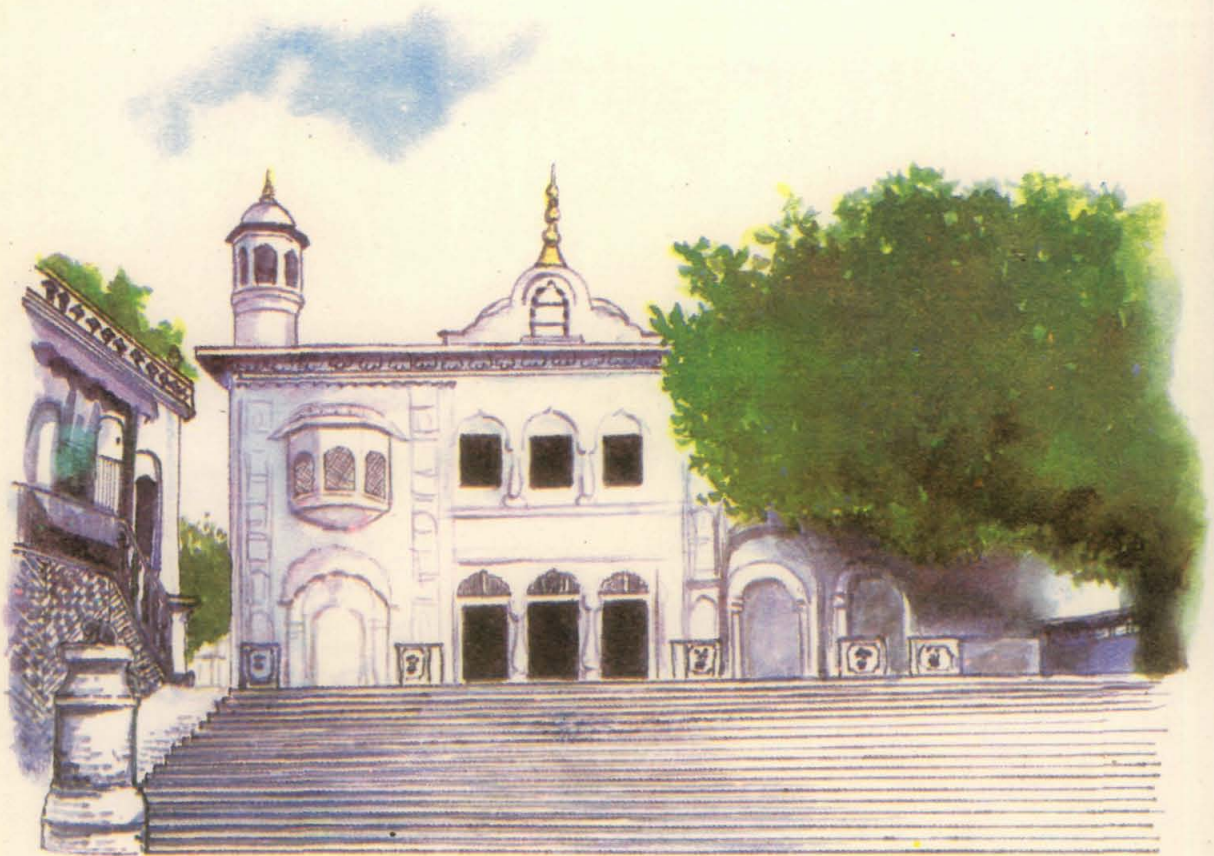


Harmander Sahib at Patna is the most important Gurdwara in Bihar. It is one of the five Takhats. It is the birth place of Guru Gobind Singh.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

This may be used to explain that important places of Sikhs are not confined to Punjab alone.

19. Sach Khand Hazur Sahib



Sach Khand is the most important Gurdwara at Hazur Sahib in Maharashtra. It is one of the five Takhts. Guru Gobind Singh died here. Its design resembles the Golden Temple.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

Parents and teachers should reinforce the concept that Sikhism is not confined only to Punjab.

20. Damdama Sahib



Damdama Sahib is one of the five Takhats. It is situated at Village Talwandi Sabo in Punjab. Guru Gobind Singh stayed here for nearly a year and prepared the revised version of Guru Granth Sahib.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

The place of Damdama Sahib in Sikh history should be brought out by the contributions made by Guru Gobind Singh while sojourning here mainly in revising and recompiling the scriptures.

PART III—IMPORTANT SYMBOLS

21. Ik Onkar



“*IK ONKAR*” is an important symbol of Sikhism. These are the first two words of *Mul Mantra* and indeed of *Guru Granth Sahib*. It gives the concept of God as one.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

The children may recite *Mul Mantra* and try to understand the other attributes of God.

22. 5 Ks (Kakars)



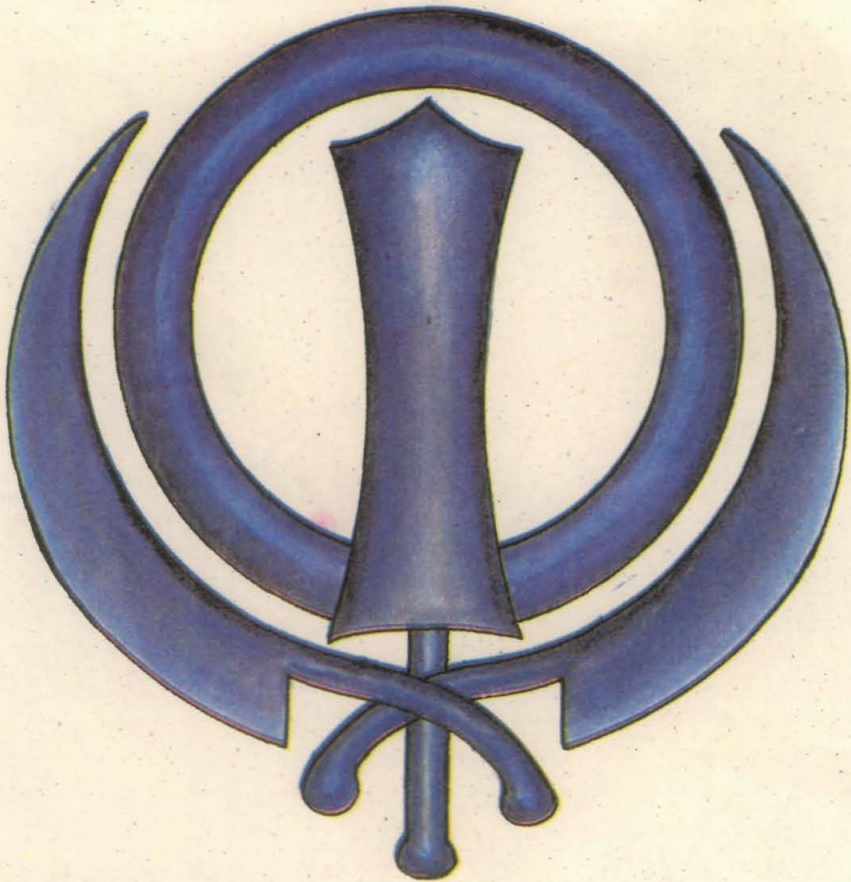
KAKARS : This is the name given to the five symbols of the Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh made it compulsory for every Sikh to wear these. They are known as *Kakars* because their names begin with K. They are :

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Kesh : Uncut hair | 3. Kara : Iron bracelet |
| 2. Kangha : Comb | 4. Kirpan : Sword |
| 5. Kachha : Drawers or short pants | |

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

The children must be explained the importance of each *Kakar*. The difference between Amrit-dhari and Sehaj-dhari Sikhs may be brought out.

23. Khanda



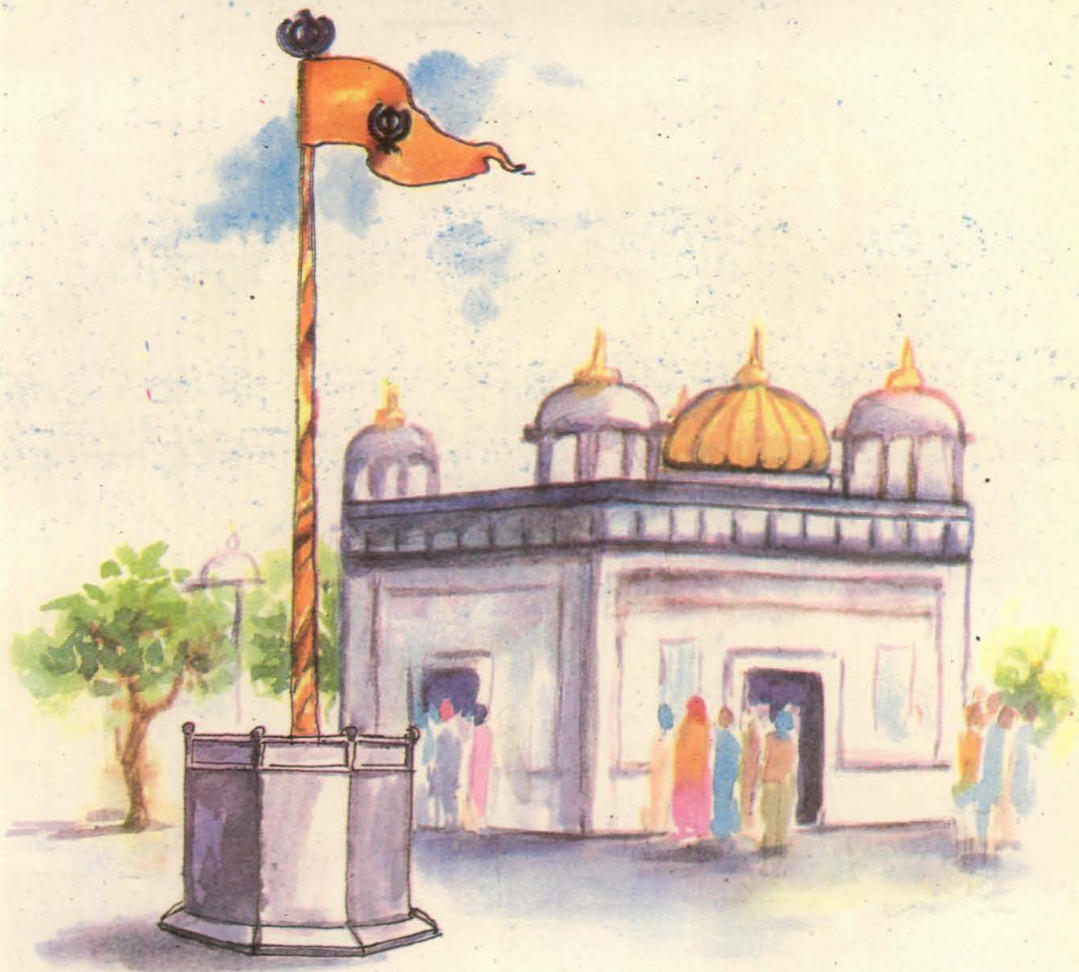
KHANDA is the emblem of the Khalsa. It consists of the following :

1. Two-edged sword at the centre. This itself is known as *Khanda*.
2. *Chakkar* (an iron ring)
3. Two swords on either side of the *Chakkar*.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

The significance of the three components may be explained to the children. For example, the two edged sword is used for stirring *Amrit*. The first one used for the purpose by Guru Gobind Singh is kept at Anandpur Sahib

24. Nishan Sahib



NISHAN SAHIB is the name given to the flag of the Khalsa. It is saffron in colour, triangular in shape and the *Khanda* drawn on it in black. The flag post is also generally covered with a saffron cloth and has a metallic *Khanda* at the top. One can see *Nishan Sahib* erected in all public gurdwaras.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

Explain the importance of *Nihshan Sahib* to students and that its use started during the days of Guru Hargobind:

25. Panj Piaras



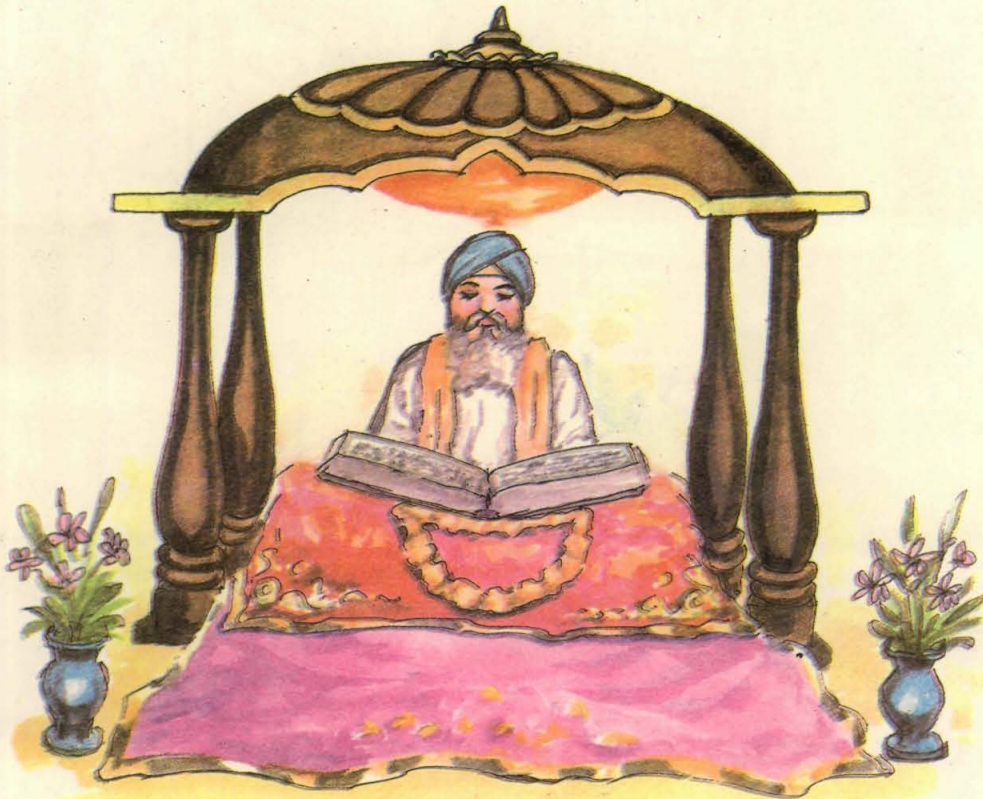
PANJ PIARAS means the five loved ones. The concept began with the first five Sikhs to be initiated by Guru Gobind Singh into the Khalsa order. They are thus the Symbols of the Khalsa.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

The story of the formation of the Khalsa Order can be reinforced here.

PART IV— PRACTICES AND VALUES

26. Akhand Path



Akhand Path means the recitation of the entire Guru Granth Sahib without any interruption or break. It takes about 48 hours to complete. A relay of *pathis* (reciters) take turns at reading.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

Significance of reciting the True Name (Nam Japana) and the status of the Granth Sahib may be brought out. Children may also be told about the important occasions when Akhand Path is organised.

27. Ardas

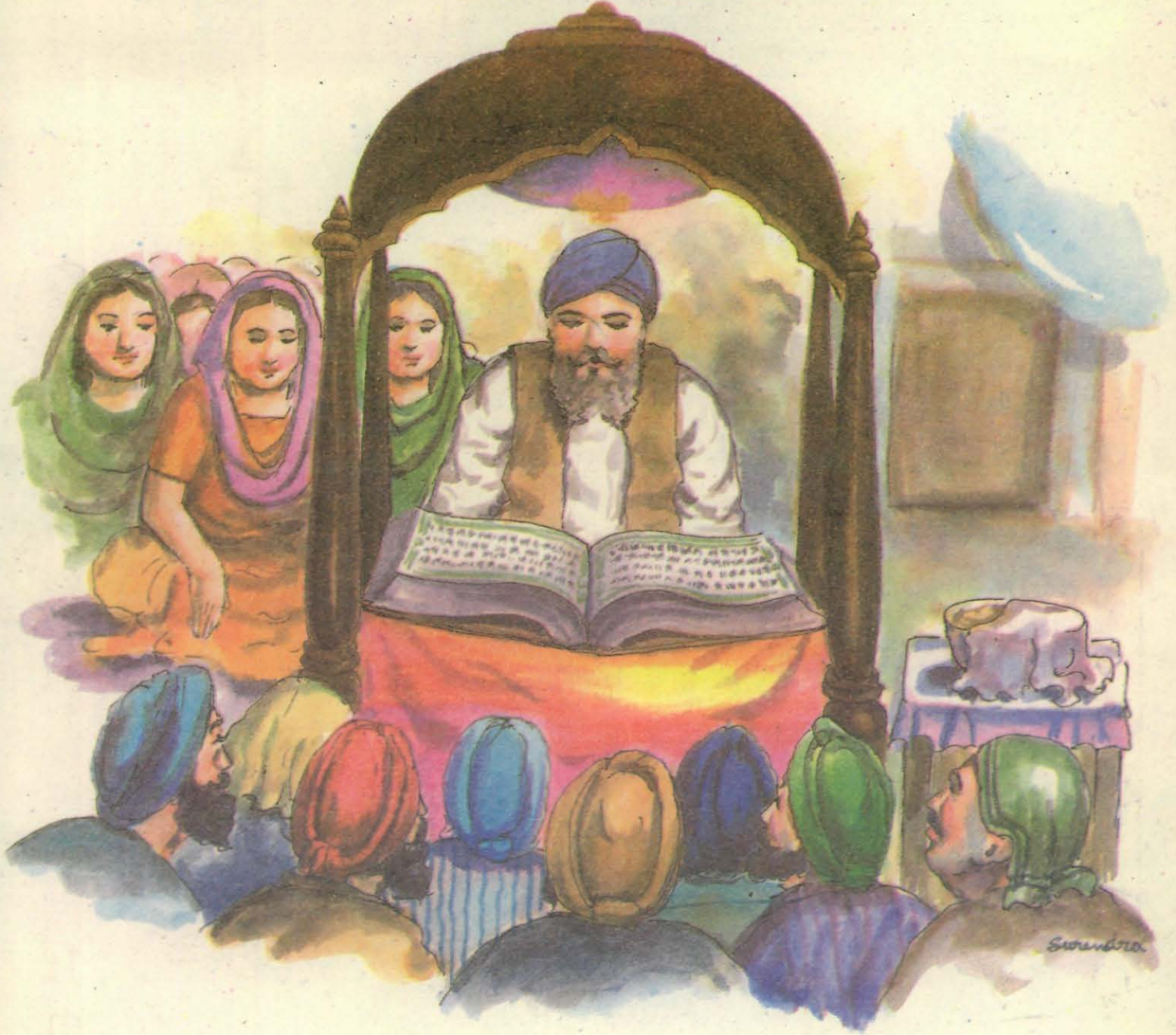


Ardas is the common prayer of the Sikhs. It is usually recited at the beginning or end of an important task. This is a way of remembering God, the Gurus and the sacrifices made by Sikhs in history. It forms the ideal of a true Sikh. The *Ardas* ends with a prayer for imbibing these values and principles of Sikhism.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

Though written by Guru Gobind Singh and modified by Bhai Mani Singh, further additions are made by edicts of the Akal Takhat. Thus the *Ardas* seems to encapsulate the on-going history and unity of Sikhs. Important occasions when *Ardas* is recited should be known to the children.

28. Wak

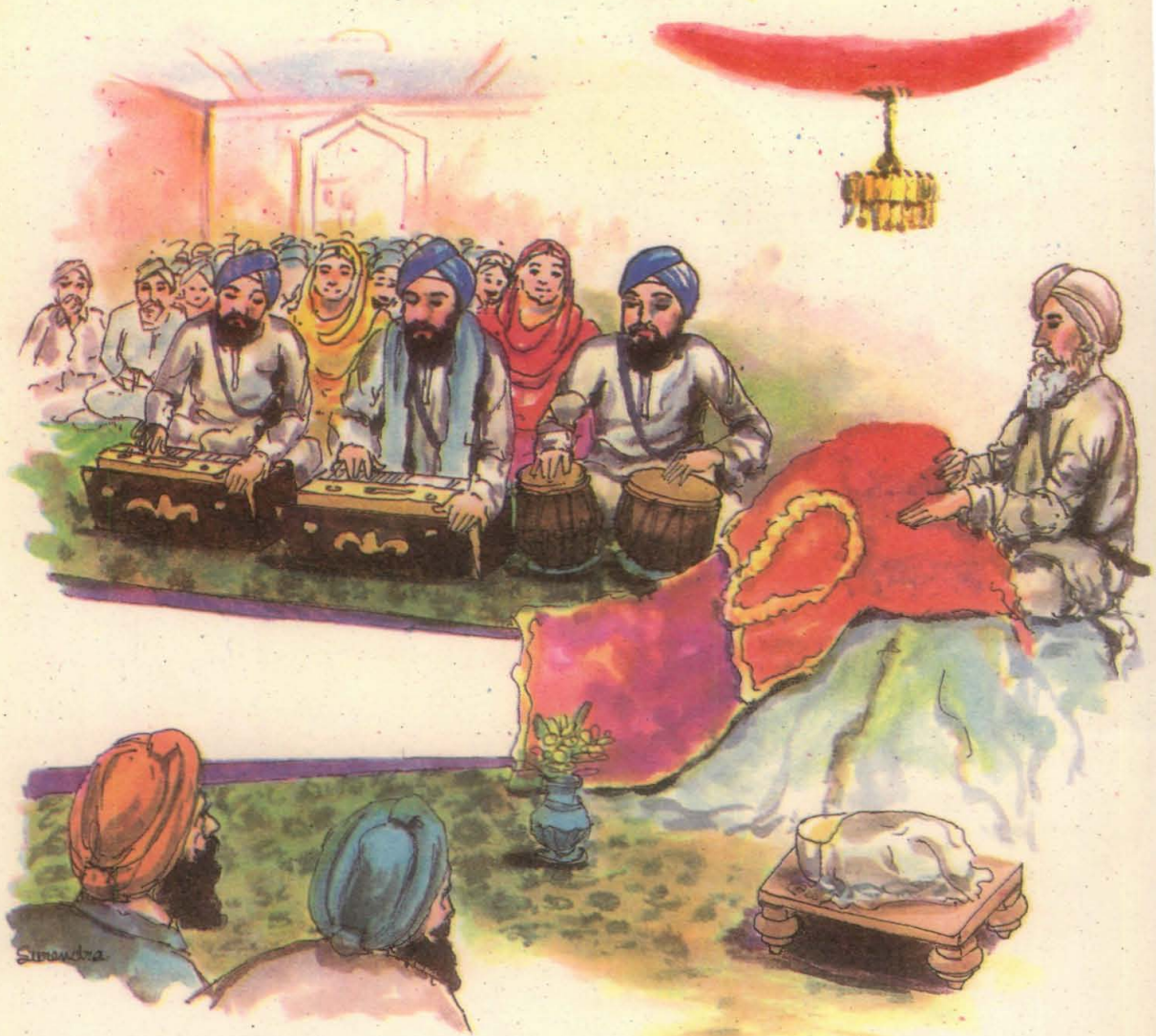


Guru Granth Sahib is opened at random. The first line or sentence of the shabad on the left page form the 'Wak'. It is the thought of the day to be learnt and imbibed. This is a method of getting guidance from Guru Granth Sahib. Most of the Sikh religious ceremonies end with it.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

Since Guru Granth Sahib represents wisdom, the importance of understanding the *Wak* must be made clear. It is a way of becoming wise and good.

29. Kirtan

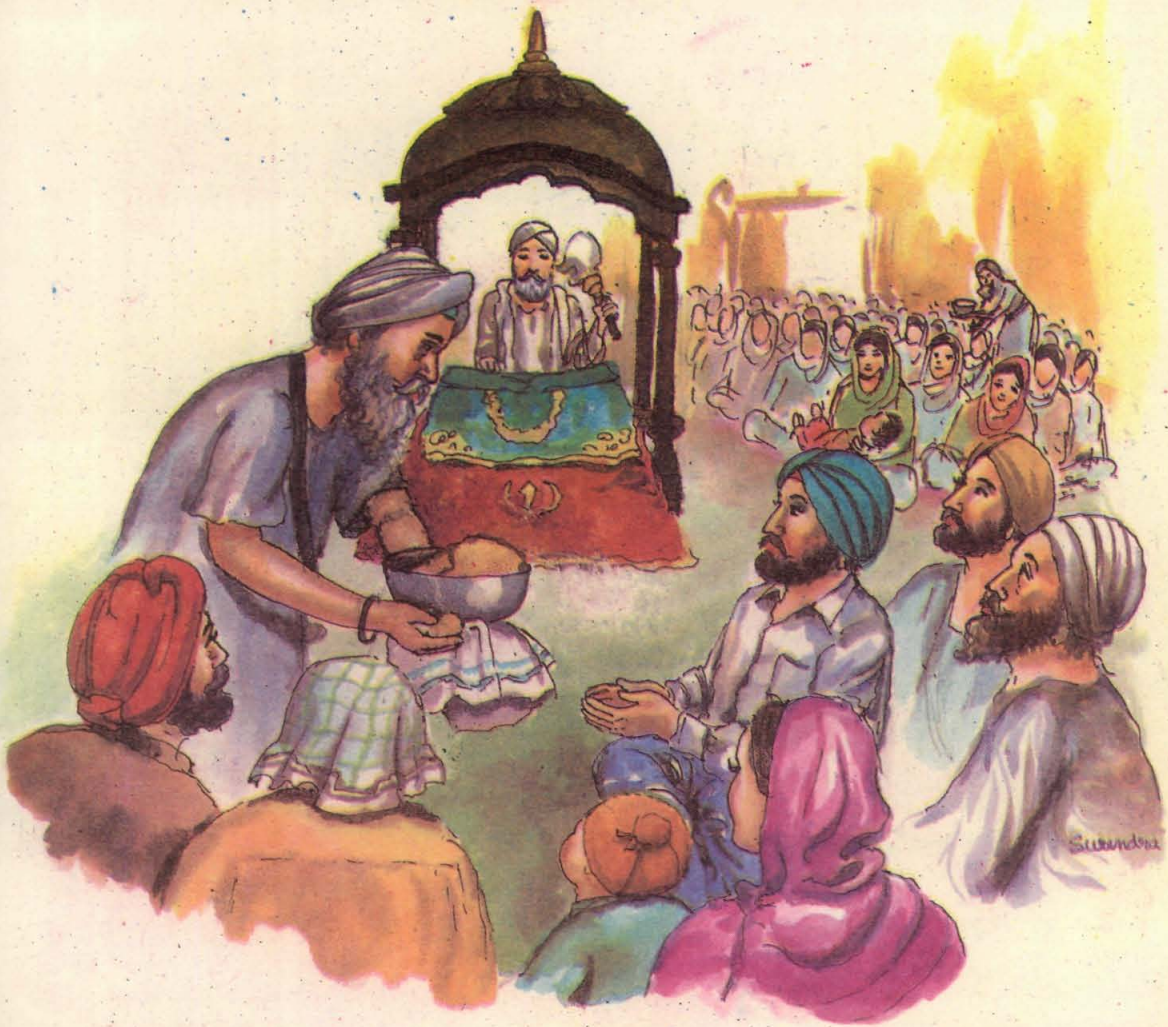


Kirtan is the popular form of worship. It is the singing of hymns from Guru Granth Sahib. It helps people to participate in prayer and to take advantage of the divine atmosphere. *Kirtan* is a part of most of the religious ceremonies of the Sikhs.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

Children need to be explained that Guru Granth Sahib is set to music. Concept of *Mohalla* may also be explained.

30. Karah Parshad

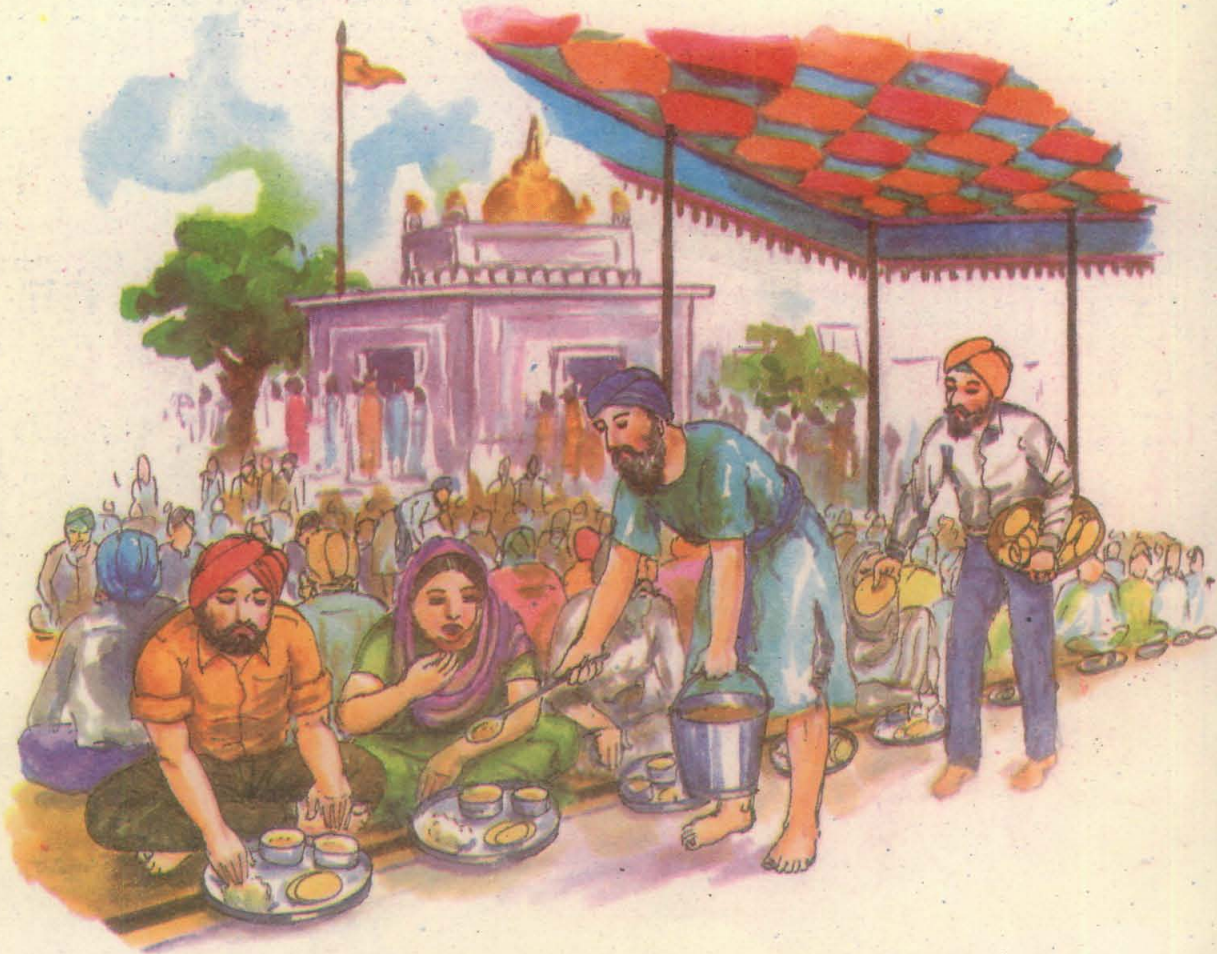


Karah Parshad is a sweet dish distributed to devotees at a religious ceremony. It is made holy by crossing it with the *kirpan* at the end of *ardas*.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

Karah Parsad removes the differences of caste in the matter of food and enshrines in it the sense of equality for all before the Guru. Children must be taught to treat it with respect.

31. Langar



Langar is the free community kitchen. It is an essential part of Gurdwaras today. Provisions for food are bought from the combined contributions of all. It is cooked by volunteers. The meals thus cooked are eaten by people of all castes and religions sitting together in a row. Guru Nanak started this idea. It was taken up by other Gurus.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

The children may be introduced to the concept of *Pangat* and *Sangat*. The concepts of equality, sharing and charity may also be reiterated at this point.

32. Amrit (Baptism)



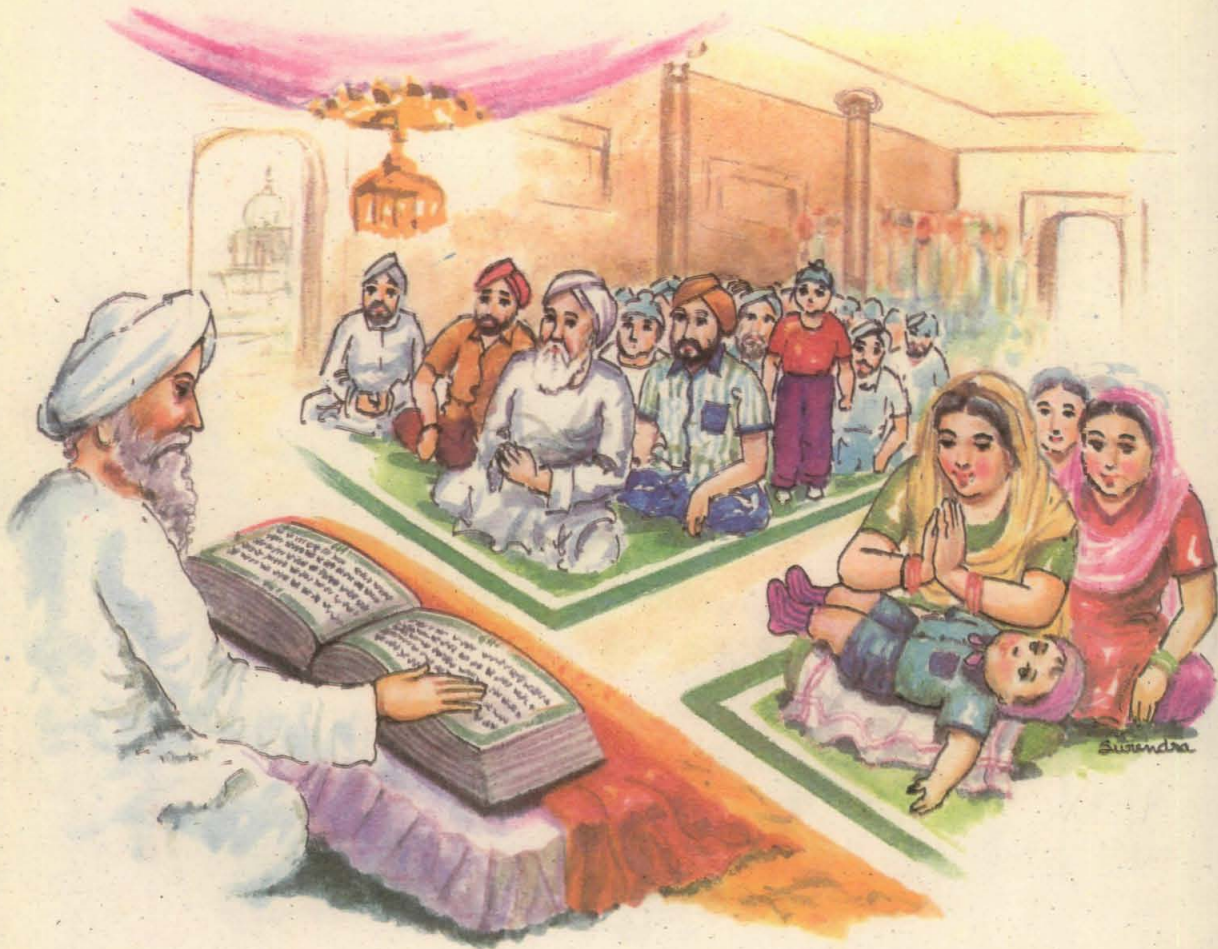
Amrit is the holy water used for baptism of a Sikh. It is prepared by dissolving sugar in water with a double-edged sword, while *path* is being recited. It is an important part of baptism—*Amrit Chhakana*.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

It may be pointed out that anyone thus baptised is called an 'Amrit-dhari'. But all Sikhs need not necessarily be 'Amrit-dharis! Distinction between Amrit-dharis and Sahaj dharis may be explained.

To become a member of the Khalsa order, a Sikh has to go through this ceremony of baptism. The Amrit-dhari has to strictly follow all the rules of Sikhism.

33. Nam Karan Ceremony

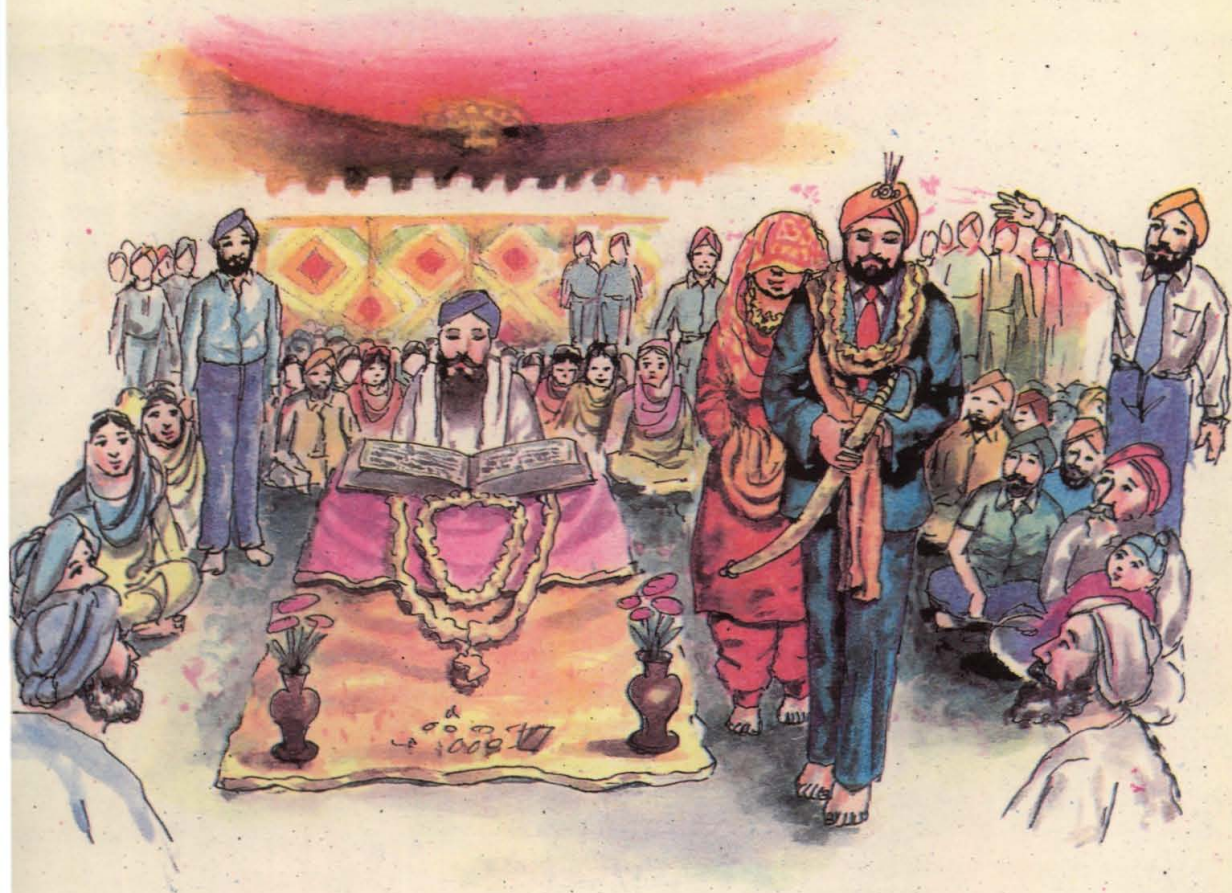


The naming of a new-born child is done in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. A name is chosen, beginning with the first letter of the 'Wak' (*Wak* is the first line of the shabad on the first page when Guru Granth Sahib is opened at random). The child is also given some *amrit* to drink.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

Guru Gobind Singh, on establishing the Khalsa, had ordained that the names of all Sikh men must end in 'Singh' and those of the women with 'Kaur'.

34. Sikh Wedding



The wedding ceremony of the Sikhs, or the '*Anand Karaj*', is conducted in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. Four stanzas from Guru Granth Sahib which comprise the nuptial hymn, are recited. These four stanzas are called the '*Lawan*'. While the *lawan* are being read out the couple goes around Guru Granth Sahib four times once with each *lawan*.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

Parents and Teachers should bring out the simplicity of the ceremony. It may also be emphasized that it should be completed in the morning before noon.

35. Turban



Turban is the head gear worn by Sikhs. Many men in India wear a turban whatever be their religion or region. But Sikhism has made this headgear a very important part of their dress. It serves as a protection for the *Kesh* (hair) and as a mark of respect.

Hints for Parents and Teachers :

Covering the head as a mark of respect in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib should be told. The *patka* is a convenient substitute for the turban.

